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RHMFIUU/CJTF HOA  
RUZEFAA/CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE  
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RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL

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SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: SOMALIA - MOGADISHU FIGHTING CONTINUES FOR A FIFTH DAY

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Fighting between Islamists and Hisbul Islami and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) continued in Mogadishu May

¶13. Somali media report injured and wounded in the hundreds and displaced persons in the thousands. TFG officials tell us Ras Kamboni leader Hassan al Turki, and al-Shabaab leaders Gobale and Muhktar Robow had arrived in Mogadishu. In a sign of the situation's fluidity, a key Abgal subclan apparently switched allegiances to the government. TFG officials say they repulsed an attack on May 13, and continue to hold defensive positions along the Sodonka Road, though they tell us difficult challenges lie ahead.  
End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Fighting between Islamic extremist groups Al-Shabaab and Hisbul Islami, and the TFG resumed May 13 in Mogadishu. Somali media report over 100 people have been killed. Development assistance counterparts confirm that displaced citizens now number in the thousands.

¶3. (SBU) An audibly more nervous Prime Minister Omar Sharmarke told us May 13 that the TFG continues to hold defensive positions in the lower Yaqshid and Wardhigley districts, roughly along Sodonka road. A late-morning attack against TFG positions in the Fagah neighborhood of Yaqshid, in the vicinity of Bacaad Market, or roughly two kilometers from Villa Somalia, was repulsed, according to Security Minister Omar Hashi. Hashi also told us that Islamists, supported by "hundreds" of non-Somali jihadists, were gathering in the Kilometer Four area of southwest Mogadishu. Africa Union troops have several bases in the area, but according to reports, they were not under concerted attack, and remained in their camps, possibly in accordance with their mandate, but also maybe because they assessed that their involvement would interfere with the TFG's plans.

¶4. (SBU) At mid-afternoon mortar shelling was reported in the vicinity of presidential offices at Villa Somalia. A contact at Villa Somalia told us AMISOM responded with a counter barrage, successfully suppressing the shelling. Reaching Security Minister Omar Hashi again, he informed us of reports Ras Kamboni leader Hassan al Turki, and al-Shabaab leaders Gobale and Muhktar Robow had arrived in Mogadishu to encourage their fighters. We asked Hashi his assessment of the strategic situation. He responded laughing, "We cannot be scared of monkeys. These are monkeys. We have the upper hand."

¶5. (SBU) President Sharif continued to publicly lobby for the fighting to stop. On May 13, at a ceremonial signing of a recently passed Sharia law bill, he called for an end to the hostilities, and reiterated the need for dialogue. He pointed out the fighting's devastating effects on civilians. President Sharif's security secretary told us the President calmly answered journalist's questions. Meanwhile, according to our contacts, an al-Shabaab

spokesman was on the radio proclaiming "We are at war with evil. We urge the people to support and stand by us. We are nearing victory to create a true Islamic government."

¶6. (SBU) On May 13, former deputy defense minister Jelle (Hawiye/Abgal) reported a key meeting on May 12 between Abgal community leaders at a private home near the National Stadium. At the meeting, Abgal/Wa'esli leaders, key among them Abdulkadir Adani, former Courts financier, agreed to rejoin Abgal subclans in support of the government. Jelle said the Wa'esli subclan was alarmed by the recent apparent coalescing of Habr Gedr militias with al-Shabaab against the government. At the meeting, skeptical Abgal sub-clan leaders challenged the Wa'eslis to prove their new allegiance to the government. They ordered the Wa'esli leaders to deny al-Shabaab access to the Wa'esli's upper-Yaqshid district stronghold, from which al-Shabaab launched attacks on May 9-11. On May 13, upper Yaqshid was quiet. Al-Shabaab was forced launched attacks into the Bacaad Market area from Wardhigley instead, our contacts tell us. Jelle claimed the Abgal were discussing contributing fighters to the government.

RANNEBERGER